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1. "Certain structural peculiarities of the I-novel." By Miss Katharine Merrill, of Austin, Ill.

By I-novel is meant one related in the first person,—only those in the form of a continuous narrative being here considered. An I-novel need not be closely autobiographical, but when an autobiographical novel is put in the first person it gains in lifelikeness and also in subjectivity through the directness of the form.

Directness and capacity for intensity are, accordingly, the first qualities noted in I-narrative. The inherence of these is proved by the difference in the nature of novels cast in this form. The story of adventure, such as Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, the tract-novel, such as Kingsley's *Alton Locke*, and the novel of passion, such as Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, possess in their material the quality of intensity, though this quality is due to different causes. This intensity in the nature of the material is at once aided by the directness of the first personal form of discourse. The I-form thus seems especially adapted to work that is intense and concentrated rather than flowing and comprehensive. The truth of this is enforced by the absence in these novels of diversity of characterization and multiplicity of interests. To a story possessing at once variety and also depth and minuteness of character-portrayal, the I-form is far less adapted.

The reason is that the I-form compels unity, owing to the structural importance of the narrator. The fact that everything passes through the mind of the I-narrator creates inevitably a certain unity of structure; though it does not *necessitate* unity of material. Indeed, so inherent in the I-form is unity of structure, that in material it passes to the opposite extreme and allows the greatest diversity. (This explains why such a story as Smollett's *Roderick Random* can appear in the first-personal form.)

This structural importance given the narrator is a fundamental quality of I-narrative. As a result, an I-novel may have greater freedom in the relations of time and space, it may cover the whole life of its hero with less interruption, than a third-personal novel, and it allows a freer use of retrospect in a rapid survey of a period, because of the fixed centre of the "I."

But this fixed centre has also its disadvantages, because it is likely to result in violation of probability. Hence arises the problem of legitimacy, of rendering natural the narrator's knowledge and ignorance, his presence and absence, his acting and his not acting. The peculiar difficulty of the I-form is that the narrator is a double person, being a figure in the story and also a representative of the author. As author he is bound to prepare the reader for the future; as fictitious personage he must often remain ignorant of what he is making others see. How is this to be done with probability? (Question stated, not answered.) The legitimating of the narrator's knowledge of occurrences, and of the moving him about also offers difficulties. This is largely the same as the problem of motiving

the behavior of the personages. The solutions of it cannot easily be classified, and the study of the problem in the particular novels considered cannot be reduced to the scope of an abstract. Not one of them entirely escapes improbability.

This paper was discussed by Dr. P. S. Allen, Professors J. S. Nollen, W. H. Carruth, Mr. E. P. Morton, Mrs. Franklin, and Dr. H. C. Peterson.

2. "The stem-changing verbs in Spanish." By Professor A. H. Edgren, of the University of Nebraska.

The object of this study is not to trace the history and nature of the thematic vowel-changes in Spanish verbs, but to find how far the method of distinguishing the stem-changing verbs from others with a like thematic vowel may be simplified.

Very little aid is to be had by historical considerations. Though it be true, with certain well-known modifications, that the changeable *e* and *o*-vowels came from Latin *ē* and *ō*, yet this principle, even if of any practical use to the ordinary Spanish student, could not serve as a criterion of distinction for the reason that the unmodified *e* and *o*, as shown by appended lists, is at least as often derived from Latin *ē*, *ō* as the modifiable *e*, *o*. Besides dialectical borrowing or influence, and analogical formations, a multitude of words have come into the language after the law of vowel-gradation had ceased to be operative in Spanish. Diez, who first formulated the now somewhat modified theory of the derivation of the variable vowels, added that they are usually followed by *l*, *m*, *n*, *v*, or *s* + another consonant. If this qualification, made use of in some grammars, were accordant with actual facts it would furnish a most welcome aid in recognizing the stem-changing verbs. But it is absolutely valueless. Not much above one-half of the stem-changing verbs show the form described by Diez; and, what is more fatal, the unmodifiable *e* and *o* are also, as shown by appended statistics, with only sporadic exceptions followed by the same consonants or consonant-groups as the modifiable, and by few others. Nor does it appear that there is any other difference of form or phonetic surroundings that might serve as a basis for a broad, practical distinction.

The important and, apparently, hitherto unobserved fact that in a vast majority of stem-changing verbs it is the radical and not, as so often in the unmodifiable verbs, the terminational tonic vowel that suffers gradation; and further that the modifiable vowel is never in hiatus or followed by any other surd mute than sporadically *c*, *t*, and that when it is *e* it is never preceded by *c*, *j* or *ll*, will help in a negative way to eliminate a great number of unchangeable stems from consideration.

Remarks on this paper were offered by Professor Raymond Weeks.